

AMSAT at the Mesa, Arizona Hamfest

by Patrick Stoddard, WD9EWK/VA7EWK, wd9ewk@amsat.org

The AMSAT table at the Superstition Hamfest in Mesa, AZ was successful.

There was lots of traffic by the table and good crowds for the two AO-51 demonstrations (1615 and 1755 UTC). I, along with Gerry, VE4GTB/KD7MDB, and Larry, W7LB, had a great time with an AMSAT table with AMSAT stuff along with the satellite demonstration(s) for the first time in at least a couple of years for a Phoenix-area hamfest. We also had some help from an AMSAT life member, George, W7ON, (my father-in-law), who lingered around the table striking up conversations and also answered questions from passers-by. AO-51 regulars Leo, W7JPI, and Ron, W6ZQ, stopped by throughout the morning. It was nice to have them make the drive from southern Arizona to the Phoenix area.

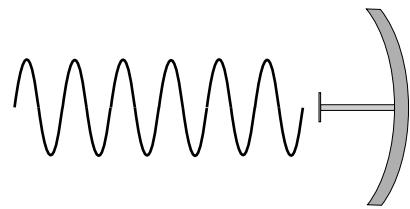
The first demonstration was a great AO-51 pass, at 1615-1630 UTC. With the satellite up to 80 degrees elevation, it was good for us with lots of activity across North America (10 QSOs). The 1755-1805 UTC pass, a westward pass with maximum 9 degrees elevation, was pretty good (3 QSOs, plus I heard a Mexican station toward the end of the pass that I could not make a contact with). My station was an IC-2720H mobile radio at 15W into my Arrow Antennas handheld dual-band Yagi (using a Diamond duplexer, to handle the higher power output).

From the radio's speaker jack, I strung an external speaker away from the radio for the crowd to listen to, along with a small earpiece so I could hear the radio and a Sony digital recorder to capture the activity on these passes (and log the contacts later). Larry, W7LB, listened to the activity with his FT-817 and Yagi, along with the crowd around the external speaker.

I had thought about trying at least one VO-52 pass during the hamfest, but never got around to it. We were talking with people for much of the morning; I didn't get my FT-817 out and try to work that satellite like I saw during the AMSAT demos at Dayton earlier this year. There will be other chances to do that.

We are planning to have an AMSAT table at three other Phoenix-area hamfests in the next few months and we will try to do demos on AO-51 provided the schedule is compatible with our equipment. Maybe other satellites, if those passes are compatible with these hamfests and the equipment we have. I'll post more information in advance of those hamfests, and hopefully we'll hear you during those demonstrations or see you at the hamfests.

73! ☺



Patrick, WD9EWK/VA7EWK, works the birds from the Meas, AZ hamfest while interested hams observe.



It's easy to set up an AMSAT booth. Contact Martha at AMSAT HQ for information on how to do it. Why not set one up at your next hamfest?

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of the hugely successful OSCAR 13. To keep costs low, it is based on a flight spare chassis left over from the OSCAR 13 development program. There will, however, be several new innovations. For example, the Mode U/V transponder, with a planned 80 kHz bandwidth, will be based on DSP technology using software developed in the UK and SDR HELAPS jointly developed with AMSAT-NA. The IHU-3 will be a new development based on a unit successfully tested on OSCAR-40. Several other experiments will test techniques needed for the proposed flight of an Amateur Radio spacecraft to Mars (Phase 5A), for example, a low power beacon simulating the weak signals that it will send from the Phase 5A satellite (P5A) on its journey to Mars. This will allow radio amateurs to test their stations in readiness for P5A.

The optimal years for launching a Mars bound spacecraft are 2009 or 2011 so it is important that P3E is launched as soon as possible. This is currently planned for the end of 2008. It is realized that the next important step is to obtain an agreement with a suitable launch agency to undertake to fly the satellite.

AMSAT Needs You!

AMSAT needs your support to achieve our goals. Our Eagle satellite project is ramping up and our commitment to P3E is increasing. Please call the office or visit the AMSAT Web Store to make your donation to keep us going. All donations of \$120.00 or more qualify for President's Club status.

For information on setting up a hamfest AMSAT booth or giving presentations at local ham clubs, contact Martha at the AMSAT office (301) 589-6062 or your AMSAT Field Operations director, Gould Smith at WA4SXM@amsat.org.

73,

Richard M. Hambly, W2GPS
AMSAT President ☺